

A
HISTORY
OF THE
OLD CAMBRIDGE
PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB

JAMES A. WELLS

Sturgis H. Thorndike

from the O. C. P. C.

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THE History of the Old Cambridge Photographic Club, which follows, is published by the club in 1905 as a memorial to the author, MR. JAMES A. WELLS, the first president of the club and until his death in 1904 an untiring active member. The text including the Dedication is published without change from the original manuscript. It should be said, however, that in full justice, the names of MISS CAROLINE E. PEABODY and of MISS HELEN T. PEABODY are joined to that of MISS ALICE C. ALLYN in the minds of the members when mention is made in the text of the founder and the founding of the club. They were equally with her instrumental in the inauguration of the new departure in Cambridge.

A
SHORT HISTORY
OF THE
OLD CAMBRIDGE
PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB

BY
JAMES A. WELLS

1903

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To

MISS ALICE C. ALLYN,

the founder of the club,

This History

is respectfully dedicated

by

the author.

A HISTORY OF THE OLD CAMBRIDGE PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB.

PROLOGUE, 1892.

THE general adoption of dry plates between 1880 and 1890, with the consequent changes and improvements in apparatus, so simplified and facilitated all the processes of photography that many were induced to take up the art as a recreation. In Cambridge, as in other places, were a number of enthusiasts, working by themselves with more or less success, who saw and appreciated the benefits which would result from regular association with other craftsmen, for comparison of methods and mutual advice and assistance, and the question was often asked, "Why should we not have a photographic club?" Nothing, however, was done until Miss Alice C. Allyn invited her photographic friends to meet at her house on the twenty-sixth day of March, A. D. 1892, for the purpose of organizing a camera club. Seven responded to the call, and the evening was passed in informal discussion. The situation was entirely novel; there was no example for the establishment of an association upon such lines as existing conditions seemed to require; the necessity for keeping the society small and select precluded any hope of raising by assess-

ment enough to hire and equip rooms for meetings and the practical operations of the art, while there was no record of a successful club without a local habitation and a home. It was impossible to foresee either the difficulties to be encountered or the results to be accomplished, but "nothing venture nothing gain." Before the meeting adjourned, it was resolved to lead off in a new field, to found a club, meeting at the residences of the members, and trust to fortune. Miss C. E. Peabody was chosen secretary, and the Old Cambridge Photographic Club was launched.

Sail on into the sea, O ship!
Through wind and wave right onward steer.
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea,
Our hearts, our hopes are all with thee!

The rash adventurers risking their fortunes in this frail bark to brave the perils of unknown, uncharted seas, were,—Alice C. Allyn, Caroline L. Parsons, Caroline E. Peabody, Helen T. Peabody, Henry L. Rand, Henry M. Spelman, F. C. de Sumichrast, James A. Wells,—four of whom are still upon the rolls.

The new secretary called a meeting at the residence of the Misses Peabody on April 13. The ship, being now fairly afloat, was joined by those invited to the first meeting who were unable to attend, and other members were elected, the club starting with a membership of eighteen. It had been believed at first that a small, informal club would run itself,—a secretary to send notices of meetings being the only officer necessary; but it became evident very early that a ship without captain or chart was not likely to reach port even if it escaped utter wreck. Officers were therefore elected, Mr. Wells, president, and Mr. Spelman, vice-

president, who, with the secretary already chosen, should form the council of the club, and who were appointed a committee to draw up a constitution and report at the next meeting. Mr. Wells then read a letter on choice of an outfit, addressed to Miss Hawkeye, an imaginary member, supposed to be in want of advice, and the meeting adjourned.

On April 27 the records of the last meeting were read for the first time, and, there being no errors or omissions, were approved. A form of constitution prepared by the council was submitted and adopted, very much as offered, after a good deal of argument and discussion on trivial unimportant points. The rather long name was chosen to avoid confusion with a Cambridge camera club already established in Cambridgeport. The evening closed with a letter to Miss Hawkeye on development, read by Mr. Spelman.

Meetings were held regularly until the coming of warm weather, the hostess for the evening providing some entertainment of a photographic nature. On Decoration Day, May 30, a small party spent a cloudy day on the banks of the Assabet River, in Concord, enjoying a pleasant outing, and taking some good photographs in the soft light, which were hung for inspection at the last meeting of the season. On this evening it was proposed by the council that interest during the summer vacation should be sustained by competition for a prize to be awarded early in the autumn, and an out-door group of not less than three figures was suggested as the subject. The plan was received with favor, and it was voted to hold such a contest.

The club reassembled in the fall, full of energy and enthusiasm. The experiment had succeeded beyond

the most sanguine anticipations, and a prosperous new year was assured if present interest could be maintained. The membership was now nineteen, fourteen having joined the original eight, while three had resigned. Six regular meetings had been held, with good attendance, members giving original papers and demonstrations, or reading extracts from photographic books for the instruction and diversion of the company. Photographs were handed around for comparison and criticism, while conversation on the absorbing subject of the art filled any gaps in the order of exercises. Two magazines were subscribed for and circulated.

The first annual meeting met November 28, 1892. The first annual reports of the secretary and treasurer were read; an assessment of one dollar, principally for expenses of the circulating library, was voted; the old board of officers,—Mr. Wells, president, Mr. Spelman, vice-president, and Miss Peabody, secretary, were re-elected, and the club had entered upon the year.

1892-3.

Believing that members might improve their work in portraiture, and that they ought to be encouraged to work more in company, the president offered two prizes :—

For the best full-length portrait of a member by another member, a Carbutt lantern ; for the best vignette head of a member by another member, a dispensing scale ; all work to be done by members of the club, but members allowed to help each other to any extent ; prints to be ready at first meeting in May, and at least seven members to compete in each class.

The first club competition, the group of three figures, was adjudged and the prize awarded at the meeting of December 20, at Miss Allyn's, seven members, about one third of the club, entering the contest. The family clothes-line was stretched across the parlor, and the prints attached thereto by the family clothes-pins, a novel and original but highly effective way of hanging an exhibition. The judges, Mr. E. S. Dixwell and Miss E. D. Norcross, were asked to be present and speak to the meeting about the collection and the reasons for their decision. Mr. Dixwell sent a pleasant note regretting his inability to attend, but Miss Norcross gave a very pleasant talk, criticizing the pictures, pointing out defects and merits and suggesting ways of avoiding the former. The prize, a copy of H. P. Robinson's "Pictorial Effect in Photography," was given to Mr. Morison for his "Trespassers in the Berrying Ground"; Mr. Kettell's "Little Cousins" and Miss Allyn's "Cat's Cradle" receiving honorable mention; indeed, the former, but for its being an indoor group, and so not within the rules, would have won the prize.

Early in the year an amendment to the constitution allowing the election of a limited number of associate members, non-residents of Cambridge, to enjoy the duties and privileges of regular members with the exception of the right to vote, was adopted.

Very much to everyone's regret Mr. Spelman was obliged to resign his office in January, finding that it took too much of his time. As he declined to withdraw his resignation though urged to do so, it was accepted, and a vote of thanks passed for the able manner in which he had performed his duties. At a meeting of the council called to fill the vacancy, the secretary an-

nounced that she wanted Harry Rand. Mr. Rand was accordingly appointed vice-president. Everyone familiar with the club's career during the next four years will bear witness to the wisdom of the secretary's choice.

Through the kindness of Mr. O. W. Huntington, who placed a room and lantern in Boylston Hall at their service, the club enjoyed its first lantern show January 31, Mr. Rand, with Mr. Huntington's assistance, exhibiting a collection of his own slides.

At the meeting which followed, at Mr. Rand's house, Miss Helen Peabody startled the club very much by moving that a public exhibition be held in the spring or summer. The proposal was not received with enthusiasm, most of the members regarding it as rash and foolhardy to a degree, and hardly worthy of serious consideration, but, at the suggestion of the president, that public exhibitions were among the most common proceedings of photographic societies, and that a creditable one would be of great advantage to the club, while no one was pledged to any action by the appointment of a committee to investigate, Miss H. T. Peabody, Mr. Rand and Mr. Corne were appointed a committee to inquire into the advisability of a public exhibition and report at some future time.

A letter was received and read at one of the meetings, from Mr. Edgar Richards of Washington describing his method of taking portraits by the light of an ordinary window, accompanied by three large photographs of a club member then in Washington. The letter was much discussed and the secretary instructed to thank Mr. Richards in a polite note, — but the portraits were suppressed by the young lady's mother.

The required seven competitors for the president's portrait prize failing to present themselves at the first meeting in May, the time was extended in the hope that more interest might be aroused in the near future.

At the last meeting of the season, a plan for summer work, requiring each member to hand in one or more prints, the subject being left entirely to his or her own choice, and recommending a penalty for non-compliance, was offered by the council and approved by the club, the penalty being fixed by vote at a fine of one dollar. On this evening, the exhibition was held and the prize awarded in the competition for the best snow landscape taken during the winter just passed, offered by Mr. Corne. Mr. Corne, who acted as judge, stated that he had found great difficulty in choosing between three of the five photographs submitted, finally deciding in favor of Miss C. E. Peabody's "Snow in Cambridge," and giving the prize, a copy of "My Three-Legged Story Teller," to her because all work on negative and print was done by the competitor.

In all, twelve meetings were held during the year and entertained by different members, the family clothes-line being often in evidence, being hung with prints or drawings in illustration of the evening's lecture, and twice the lantern was used. The attendance showed the interest to be increasing and the club work was beginning to tell, despite the rather poor showing at the two competitions that came off, and the utter failure for the time being of the president's prize contest. As the aims and objects of the society became better understood, members were coming to appreciate the advantages of working together toward a common end, rather than wasting their energies in many different directions, each one at his own sweet will.

The second annual meeting, November 21, 1893, found twenty-four regular and one associate members on the rolls, with a balance of twenty-four cents in the treasury. The president delivered a short message, congratulating the club upon the prosperous career which had brought them to their first birthday, and urging members to work more together. The Exhibition Committee made a report, and it was voted to hold an exhibition in February; an assessment of two dollars for ordinary expenses was levied; the old board of officers was re-elected, and all was ready to begin the new year.

1893-4.

Stimulated by a newly awakened enthusiasm or the threatened fine, twenty-one of the twenty-four members contributed sixty-two photographs to the competition for summer work, December 19. The family clothes-line was discarded for the evening, and the prints hung upon a curtain of dark red cotton flannel, stretched over the wall, where, with the white mounts then in fashion, they made a most effective show. Professor de Sumichrast, a former member, who acted as judge, was instructed to give points for excellence, not exceeding fifteen for artistic and ten for technical, and, in addition, five where negative and five where print were the work of competitor; and to award a limited number of prizes to such photographs as showed very conspicuous merit. A most delightful hour was passed, listening to an informal talk from Mr. de Sumichrast, who criticized each exhibit in detail and allotted five prizes, giving the highest possible number of points to two of the prints. The great improvement of this collection over any previous display of the club was a most hopeful sign. Many

of the photographs, particularly if printed by modern methods, would stand well in an exhibition of to-day; but the proportion of figure pieces was small, and all the prizes were given to landscapes. The club was gaining, but still had much to learn.

The first annual exhibition narrowly escaped total wreck at the meeting of January 16, when the committee upon whom the success of the whole affair depended made a statement to the effect that having been appointed "to investigate and report," they had no powers after their report was accepted. A motion by Mr. Carruth, that the same committee be authorized to arrange for an exhibition and the club be assessed for the expense, was lost. After much debate a motion to reconsider resulted in a tie, decided in the affirmative by the vote of the chair. Mr. Carruth's motion was then carried and the exhibition assured, unless the club changed their minds before the appointed date. Consistency was a virtue not fully appreciated by the members at this time.

The first annual exhibition opened February 22, 1894, in rooms at the Social Union, small and low, but well lighted, central and otherwise suitable. The walls were draped with red cotton flannel, upon which were displayed two hundred and fifty photographs, selected from two hundred and ninety-three offered, covering every inch of available space. All the work of covering the walls, hanging the prints and arranging the rooms was done by the committee, assisted by two or three volunteers. The collection was on view three days, and was visited by more than a thousand people, who were much interested and loud in praise, many coming several times and crowding the rooms to the limit of their capacity.

This exhibition did more than anything preceding it to consolidate the club and establish it upon a firm, lasting foundation, and members, while all ready to claim credit, were obliged to acknowledge their obligations to Miss Helen Peabody and her few supporters, who were able to bring the affair to a successful conclusion in spite of the apathy of many and the active opposition of a few. The entire cost was thirty-nine dollars and twenty-four cents, about half of which was for drapery and other properties still in use.

Any feelings of undue self-sufficiency and conceit, which may have been aroused by the triumphs of the summer competition, were probably dispelled when the much postponed president's portrait prize finally came off in March. Not deeming it desirable, after examination of the pictures, to go out of the club for judges, the president appointed Miss Howe and Messrs. Morison and Thorp. Mr. Thorp summed up for the board and pronounced sentence, declaring the collection not up to the high standard established by the club, giving the prize for vignette head to Mrs. Kettell, but making no award for full length portrait, seven members not having entered in that class. The result, after so long a season for preparation, was disappointing, but called attention once more to the weakness shown in an important branch of the art. Later, the president offered a prize for the best portrait of a member, taken by another member, before the first meeting in April, 1895, members to be allowed to help each other to any extent.

A plan for summer work was submitted by the council in April, dividing the exhibits into two classes: A, in which the subject should be studies of the human face, and B, where the principal interest should not be

human figure. A very animated discussion lasting the whole evening ensued, but the plan was adopted very much as offered. At this time the club enjoyed all the advantages of a vigorous and determined opposition.

During the spring and early summer five field meetings, under the guidance of Miss Helen Peabody, were held, the club spending an afternoon with their cameras in some picturesque spot, and a number of excellent photographs were taken, the clothes-line being decorated with about sixty at the first meeting after the recess.

The reports of the secretary and treasurer read at the third annual meeting, November 20, 1894, showed continued prosperity and welfare ; thirteen regular meetings had been held during the year, with an average attendance of seventeen, and the club had been received on one occasion at the house of an ex-member. The two competitions, with lectures and papers, original and selected, illustrated by lanterns or otherwise, given by members and experts from outside, had served to entertain and instruct the company and maintain the enthusiasm. There were twenty-five regular members, the limit, and one associate, with a good balance in the treasury. It was voted to discontinue the circulating library, owing to the difficulty of keeping the periodicals moving. The annual assessment was fixed at one dollar. It was decided to hold an exhibition. The old officers were re-elected, and the year 1893-1894 had passed into history.

1894-5.

The best collection of figure studies yet shown was brought together by the division of the summer competition into two classes, twenty members being represented by thirty-nine prints. Mr. Thorp received first prize in

Class A, human interest, for a portrait group of two figures, though pressed hard by Mr. Rand with his picture of a musing girl, entitled "Revery." The prize in Class B was given to Mr. Kettell for his picture of Shawshine River.

The Exhibition Committee reported through its chairman, Mr. Carruth, that a very convenient and suitable studio in Buckingham Place could be engaged, and recommended that friends of the members should be invited to a reception and private view, before opening the hall to the public; the cost would be rather more than last year. This proposal proved nearly as astounding as the original one to hold an exhibition, and the club failed to respond with any heartiness. The reception was an entirely new departure, and many considered the rooms at the Social Union good enough for any exhibition. After some debate the question was laid upon the table, to give time for consideration and reflection. A special meeting called to settle and decide the matter was opened by the president, who said the real question was simply one of expense, the studio being an excellent place for an exhibition, and a reception an agreeable social occasion, provided the club cared to pay for them. The committee recommended that tickets for the reception be subscribed for, and the expense divided in proportion to the number taken by each member. A sufficient number were at once disposed of to ensure the success of the reception, and it was decided to engage the studio.

On the evening of February 19, the pleasant hall in Buckingham Place was filled with members and their invited guests, who enjoyed one of the most pleasant social gatherings of the year. Twenty-three of the

twenty-five members contributed pictures, and the gallery was arranged with better effect than was possible in the cramped quarters at the Social Union. Each member's exhibit was hung by itself, while the quality of the work was much better than that of 1894. During the four days it continued on view, the collection was visited by some thirteen hundred people. The signal success of the reception, with the highly effective display of the exhibition, convinced the most doubting members, and the two dollars assessed for expenses of the exhibition were cheerfully paid by all, while seventeen cents for each reception ticket was considered a very small outlay for a great deal of pleasure.

Before the exhibits were taken down, a regular meeting of the club was held in the studio, and entertained by the president, who spoke of the exhibition and the separate exhibits in a rather informal way. A ballot was afterward taken on the best collection, Mr. Wells receiving the highest vote.

The wedding of two members was celebrated at this time, and the happy pair were presented with a handsome album containing an original photograph by each of the other members.

It was also voted to purchase an album, to be kept as a record, in which photographs taking prizes in competitions and exhibitions, with any others of special interest, should be preserved.

A very creditable collection of portraits was displayed on the evening of April 23, in competition for the president's prize, showing an immense advance since the contest of the previous year. Miss Norcross acted as judge, giving the prize to Mrs. Allen for her portrait of Professor Allen seated in his study, while six other prints received honorable mention.

At the last meeting in the spring a prize offered by Mr. Corne for the best snow landscape was awarded, Miss Norcross again acting as judge. The prize was given to Miss Howe's "Distant View of Mount Chocorua," with honorable mention to two other members.

After a most prosperous and successful year, the club met for its fourth annual meeting, November 17, 1895. The secretary's report showed a satisfactory amount of work done, and the twenty-five members allowed by the constitution on the rolls, with candidates still upon the waiting list. The treasurer reported all bills collected, all debts paid, and a respectable balance on hand. An assessment for expenses was voted, and it was decided to hold an exhibition. After serving since the commencement, Mr. Wells asked to be relieved from office, and was succeeded by Mr. Carruth, Mr. Rand being re-elected vice-president, and Miss Peabody, secretary.

1895-6.

The advance made by the club had been very great in all directions, and Mr. Carruth took command of a strong, firmly-rooted society of earnest workers, rather wilful and opinionated, indeed, inclined to dispute and argue over any measure proposed, but withal true, loyal, and ready to give their best efforts in support of any scheme decided upon by the majority. Without introducing any radical changes in the policy which had proved so successful hitherto, he devoted himself to carrying the work farther upon much the same lines, with the view of increasing the benefits and advantages of the association.

The third annual exhibition opened with a reception at the Buckingham Place studio, February 18, 1896, and lasted five days, including Sunday, when the rooms were open during the afternoon. Twenty-one of the twenty-three members were represented, and the seven-teen hundred visitors pronounced the collection far superior to any preceding one. For the first time a limited number of pictures showing special merit were distinguished by marks. Messrs. Sprague and Loud, of the Boston Camera Club, who were invited to act as judges, made the awards, praising the exhibition as a whole by saying there was not a bad thing in it. This was probably the most judged display of photographs ever exhibited. At the meeting held in the studio, a letter from Mr. Sprague was read giving the judges' reasons for selection of certain prints for honors. Mr. Wells criticized the different groups of pictures orally, and the result of a ballot by the members on the relative excellence of the different exhibits, was announced. An ingenious chart of these votes made a curious study, showing the value of individual opinion in matters of art. The votes for first place were divided among four individuals, neither receiving a majority; while one member had one vote for first place and another for fifteenth, the rest being scattered along between; another received one or more votes for every place from sixth to eighteenth, finally bringing up as number thirteen. This experiment has never been repeated, and it was found necessary to suppress the chart, in deference to the feelings of those who stood lower than the head of the class.

The peaceful progress of the club was interrupted by a violent tempest, which arose before the new council

were firmly established in their chairs. The constitution then required elections of members to be by ballot, the secretary to keep a list of persons proposed, from which the council might nominate candidates to fill vacancies. This had always worked well in practice, any candidate against whom there was believed to be an objection remaining on the waiting list until the objection was removed, when he was nominated and elected, or until his name was withdrawn; but the council, about the middle of the year, decided to evade the responsibility of selecting candidates, and two vacancies occurring, nominated the first two names on the list, leaving their fate to the will of the club. One of them was a gentleman not acceptable to some of the members, while the other was known to only a few. Nominated without any indorsement by the council, they were blackballed and much feeling excited, the matter being taken up by those not interested in the rejected candidates, and for a long time the atmosphere was very stormy. Another candidate, very acceptable to most of the club, was nominated and thrown over, and it was seen to be impossible to fill existing vacancies while the agitation continued. Many wild and extravagant plans were proposed and discussed without effect, until, after nearly three months of turmoil, an amendment to the constitution proposed by Mr. Thompson, placing all the responsibility for acceptance or rejection of candidates upon the council, the club having the privilege of acting as an advisory committee, was adopted and quiet restored, but for two years thereafter no new names were added to the rolls.

Another gusty squall was excited by the attempt to carry out the club competitions. Before the summer

recess the council, believing the club competitions played an important part in the regular yearly course and were well established in public favor, submitted a plan for three competitions every year "until otherwise ordered," one for figure studies, one for portraits, with the view of encouraging work in those branches, and the third, in which choice of subject was left to the competitor for his efforts in the other, possibly uncongenial, classes; members to pay a small fine in each class provided they failed to compete. As usual, the plan was adopted with a few amendments after a long and animated debate. Having signified their approval of the council's plan, the club proceeded to add an amendment, proposed at the next meeting, providing that any member not entering the competitions might discharge all obligations by producing six finished and mounted prints, from exposures made since the last annual competition. The club believed in the competitions and a majority came into them, but when an attempt was made to determine the standing of the six finished and mounted photographs of the one non-competing member, it was discovered, very much to the surprise of those who voted for it, that the amendment made the whole competition plan utterly nugatory and void. The result of a rather acrimonious debate was that the council were instructed to revise the plan for club competitions. They presented at a later meeting a plan, retaining the three annual competitions, but omitting the amendment; this plan was contested item by item by the proposer of the amendment, but the club had returned for a time to their allegiance and the measure was passed by an almost unanimous vote and remains in force at the present time.

April 7, 1896, a message from the president was read, giving a sketch of the club from the beginning, calling attention to the progress made, and laying emphasis on the advantages to be gained by team work, and proposing that the club prepare a set of lantern slides to illustrate Charles River from the source to the sea, with a view to an exhibition the next winter. The club responded with enthusiasm, and Mrs. Kettell, Mr. Morison and Mr. Allen were appointed a committee, to which the council were afterwards joined. A map of the river was prepared by Mr. Kettell and the country divided into sections, one district being assigned to each member, and the club spent a large part of the ensuing summer wandering with their cameras on the picturesque banks of our historic stream.

In the president's absence Mr. Rand, vice-president, presided at the meeting of May 19 ; he called attention to the fact that though this was the club's sixty-first meeting, it was the first at which the jealous vigilance of the presidents had allowed him to occupy the chair.

The club met for its fifth annual meeting November 17, 1896. The season just passed had been prosperous like its predecessors ; sixteen regular meetings had been held with an average attendance of seventeen. The regular competitions in Classes A, B, and C called out a good number of creditable photographs, as had a prize offered by Mr. Corne for the best snow landscape, while members continued to furnish the instruction and amusement for most of the meetings. Mr. Carruth was re-elected president. Mr. Thorp was chosen vice-president in place of Mr. Rand, who was allowed to retire at his own request.

Mr. Rand had been one of the main supports of the club since its foundation. Always active and hopeful, working cheerfully for the community without thought of self, he enjoyed the esteem and good-will of everyone, whether ruling as one of the council or serving humbly in the ranks.

Miss Peabody also asked to be excused from longer service, and Miss Smith was chosen secretary, but as she declined to serve, and no one else was willing to assume the arduous duties, Miss Peabody consented to keep the records for a short time until some other person could be found for her successor. It may be added that this little sought and not much desired person has not yet been discovered.

1896-7.

The club's great work, the illustration of Charles River, was completed early this year. Over two hundred photographs of the river and its shores, taken during the summer, were shown at the first meeting in the autumn, from which selections were made for the exhibition. The chosen negatives were intrusted to a professional photographer to make slides, but his work proving unsatisfactory, a set of excellent slides was prepared by members of the club. The first exhibition was given in Brattle Hall in January, for the benefit of the Social Union, Mr. Thorp acting as showman and delivering the explanatory lecture. The hall was filled with a refined and cultivated audience, who showed their interest and appreciation by frequent applause, and after paying all expenses something was realized for the Social Union. Applications were at once received for repetitions of the performance, and Mr. Thorp

exhibited the collection some twenty-five or thirty times before literary and other societies, seeking, when possible, to aid the efforts of the Metropolitan Park Commission in calling attention to the natural beauties of our State, and the duty of preserving and developing them. Some share of the credit for this good work fairly belongs to the Old Cambridge Photographic Club.

Historic Cambridge was selected, by vote, from a number of subjects proposed for the successor to the Charles River enterprise, and Mr. and Mrs. Allen, with Mr. Wells, were appointed a committee to investigate. They found in the college library old books, engravings, drawings and pictures, illustrating the old town and its life, and Mr. Winsor, the librarian, became much interested and disposed to help. With this and other collections which would have been accessible with Mr. Winsor's support, and the old buildings and other monuments of antiquity still standing, several very interesting lectures in a little-worked field might have been prepared. But the club showed itself indifferent and apathetic, the committee's report was laid on the table, where it was allowed to lie until the autumn, and in the meantime, the unfortunate deaths of Mr. Allen and Mr. Winsor, upon whom the scheme depended largely for success, gave the finishing blow to what might have been an exceedingly brilliant achievement of the club.

At the meeting of November 9, Miss Devens gave some account of a new printing process, called "gum bichromate", which she had seen while abroad during the summer.

Affairs had fallen during the year into a regular, quiet routine, much being accomplished with little disturb-

ance. Competitions in Classes A, B, and C, with the new lantern slide contest established by the president, and the snow competition, now adopted as part of the regular club course, had, with the Charles River and the annual exhibition, kept everyone fully employed. The meetings not occupied with competitions had been diverted by lectures and demonstrations as before, among others Mr. W. L. Underwood giving the first of his bright and original talks on wild life, since become so agreeable a part of the exercises of the year. A severe loss had been sustained in the sudden and untimely death of Prof. Frederic D. Allen, one of the leading and most reliable members. Painstaking and thorough in everything he undertook, most enterprises of the club, particularly the Charles River, owed a large part of their success to his quiet, systematic methods.

At the sixth annual meeting, November 17, 1897, the usual reports for the year just passed were read, and announcements and arrangements made for the year to come. Mr. Carruth, Mr. Thorp and Miss Peabody were re-elected to hold the reins for another year.

1897-8.

Although membership had dropped to twenty, the club started on its sixth year under most favorable auspices; early enthusiasm was not diminished, and quality of work was rapidly improving.

High-water mark was reached at the fifth annual exhibition held at the hall of the Browne and Nichols School, the cosy little studio in Buckingham Place being given up to other uses. The judges, Messrs. Sprague and Whiton, of the Boston Camera Club, gentlemen of much experience in photographic exhibitions, declared

this to be the best they had ever seen, and awarded eight diplomas only, though empowered to give twelve, asserting that, after careful scrutiny, they had found eight pictures of very special and uncommon merit; but if they were required to give more premiums they must give fifty, a striking tribute to the unusual general excellence of the collection. When it was known that Miss Devens' "Aunt Howe," a picture since exhibited at all the salons and most of the leading exhibitions in this country and abroad, was one of the eight selected for honors, the quality of the photographs displayed can be appreciated. This exhibition was also noteworthy for several gum bichromate prints, said to be the first exhibited in this country, which were shown by Miss Devens.

To encourage the habit of working in concert, and to take the place of the Charles River show, fallen through after one highly remunerative experience, the Coolidge Farm contest, so called, was instituted. For this year, a spot near Charles River, abounding in picturesque possibilities, had been selected, competitors being required to set up their cameras within certain bounds, measuring three or four hundred yards each way, any view taken from within the prescribed limits being eligible. Twenty-nine prints were shown at the meeting, November 9, 1898, which were judged by Miss Smith, Miss Willard, and Miss Winlock, Cambridge artists, who gave the prize for the best single picture to Mrs. Carruth, and that for best group of three or more to Miss Devens.

After a busy and prosperous year the club met for the seventh annual meeting November 23, 1898. Fourteen regular meetings had been held with six compe-

titions and an exhibition; some of the members spent Decoration Day among the lakes and hills of Middlesex, a revival of the old field meetings discontinued long ago for want of interest; and Mrs. W. E. Russell entertained her fellow members one pleasant afternoon in June, at her place in Magnolia, where all enjoyed themselves and some good photographs were secured. Mr. Carruth, Mr. Thorp and Miss Peabody were re-elected without opposition, and the club entered upon its seventh year of profitable, happy life.

1898-9.

The first memorable event of the year was a lecture on the life of Benedict Arnold, illustrated by the lantern, successfully given by Mr. Wm. W. Ellsworth, in Brattle Hall, under the auspices of the club, on the evening of January 28.

Only seventeen members sent contributions to the sixth annual exhibition, but the judges, Messrs. Wm. Stone and Thomas Allen, Boston artists, were enthusiastic over the merit of the photographs on the walls, and insisted on giving thirteen diplomas instead of the usual twelve. A new undertaking was the furnishing catalogues of the collection, instead of designating the prints by labels attached to them as in previous years. The committee intrusted with this duty were a little ambitious, and brought out a pamphlet with reproductions of some of the most striking photographs, expecting to recover the expense by the sale of copies at ten cents each. The public, however, refused to rise to the occasion, complaining that the old way was much less trouble, and evidently considering it an imposition to be asked to pay anything at a free show. The result was

that the club were left with abundant valuable experience and a great number of unsold catalogues which, being made of incombustible paper, were not even useful to light fires with.

The resignation of Miss Allyn, the founder of the club, was tendered in February. Miss Allyn did what others talked about, and laid the foundations of a very active and vigorous photographic club. Remembering the many happy hours they owed to her enterprise, and the influence she exerted on the social and working life of the society, members made an earnest effort to induce her to alter her decision, but she refused to withdraw her resignation and it was, perforce, accepted with much genuine regret, the orphan club going on its way disconsolate.

At the invitation of Mr. Corne, the club, with invited guests, visited the Sargent collection of portraits on the evening of March 16, going by special car, and listening, after the closing hour, to a talk about the pictures by Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald.

The old board of officers, Mr. Carruth, Mr. Thorp and Miss Peabody, were re-elected at the eighth annual meeting, November 22, 1899. The year had passed much like the previous one, the attendance at meetings had been a little better, and the usual competitions were held; the president, however, deemed it necessary to call attention to the falling off in entries for the voluntary competitions, and to speak again of the usefulness and pleasure of making lantern slides.

1899-1900.

This year was very quiet and uneventful, unmarked by any unusual circumstance or incident of note. Three

of the thirteen meetings were occupied with competitions while two were entertained by members, and outside talent introduced for the diversion of the other eight. The snow competition was omitted, owing to lack of snow during the whole winter, and the Coolidge Farm from want of interest among the members. Average attendance, however, was better than it had been for several years.

The exhibition held in March, a month later than heretofore, was visited by nearly three thousand people, the largest attendance on record. The committee had introduced many changes and improvements in small details and provided a single and inexpensive, but tasteful catalogue, free for all, an innovation apparently appreciated by the public.

The McCormick collection in Copley Hall was visited in March, after the hour of closing, and a most intelligent criticism of the pictures by Mr. Vinton was enjoyed by the club and their guests.

At the ninth annual meeting, November 21, 1900, Mr. Carruth, after an able and honorable service of five years, asked to be allowed to retire, and Mr. Thorp was elected president, Mr. Sharples vice-president, and Miss Peabody secretary.

Mr. Carruth had shown himself a most diligent and efficient officer. During his entire term the council were never found unprepared, meetings were held regularly on the appointed evenings, and the entertainments were always ready; new enterprises were originated in place of old schemes whose attractiveness was beginning to wane, and competitions, lectures, demonstrations, shows and exhibitions followed each other in endless variety. Devoted to the club, and giving much time

and thought to its affairs, he had his reward in the growth and progress shown from year to year and the grateful recognition of the members. One criticism may perhaps be allowed: he did so much for the club that they lost in some degree the faculty of doing for themselves, beginning to lack the sturdy independence and self-reliance once so characteristic, and depending upon being carried along by the council rather than relying on their own exertions.

1900-1.

The regularly established routine was not very much disturbed by the change of administration. The competition in Classes A and B was held in December, only thirteen members entering a collection of prints, said by the judges not to be up to the standard of the club. The lantern competition in February was contested by seven members, while twelve entered the portrait competition in May; there was no snow competition, and the Coolidge Farm was not revived.

The club enjoyed their annual excursion to Copley Hall in March, at Mr. Corne's invitation, visiting the Exhibition of Pictures of Fair Children and listening to a talk by Mrs. Henry Whitman.

The eighth annual exhibition was held from March 30 to April 3, at Browne and Nichols Hall, twenty-one members sending one hundred and seventy prints. An official seal had long been an ambition of the club, and Mr. Carruth had been appointed a committee to negotiate for designs. A cut, planned after Mr. Carruth's rough hints, representing, on a shield supported by two

laurel branches, the sun bursting through clouds, with the motto, "Through Darkness to Light", made its appearance on the catalogue, giving it a little character; but the execution was too delicate to be effective in that position, and the club, failing to grasp the beauty of the design, decided against its adoption as the symbol of the society.

The exciting event of the year was a competition with the Boston Camera Club in photography as a fine art. The Boston club were challenged to a friendly contest and accepted, the conditions being arranged at a good-natured conference. Each club sent fifty photographs, not more than five from any one member, which were judged by three Boston artists and marked for artistic excellence, both collections being afterwards exhibited in the rooms of the Boston club. The Cambridge club were victorious by the handsome margin of two hundred and eighty-two points to Boston's two hundred and fourteen.

At the president's suggestion, it was resolved that each member take the portrait of another member during the summer, the apportionment of victims being decided by lot, a revival, in a new shape, of the old summer competitions.

Thirteen meetings were held during the year with good attendance; and members had furnished the entertainment rather more often than for several previous years. The old board of officers, Mr. Thorp, Mr. Sharples and Miss Peabody, were re-elected at the tenth annual meeting, November 27, 1901, and the year closed with a good balance in the treasury in spite of rather heavy expenses.

1901-2.

The collection of portraits of the members by the members was hung December 4. Twenty members sent in thirty-five photographs, which were judged for likeness and artistic merit by Mr. Corne, who gave the reasons for his decisions ; a portrait of Mr. Morison by Mr. Sanger was placed at the head. This new competition seemed to meet with favor, calling out more contestants than was customary, and the portraits showed that work in this field might well be encouraged, but for some reason not given it has never been repeated.

A very pleasant and gratifying incident of the year was a request from the Providence Camera Club for a loan collection to be exhibited in that city. About fifty specimens of the club's best work were sent in early in February, which were welcomed with much kindness and favor, the exhibition attracting a great deal of notice. A graceful letter, expressing their thanks and acknowledgments, was received from the Providence club.

The ninth annual exhibition was held in Browne and Nichols Hall from April 19 to 24, only sixteen members being represented. Mr. Hermann Dudley Murphy judged the pictures and gave the usual talk in the studio.

Eager to retrieve their defeat of the previous year, the Boston Camera Club sent a challenge for another competition, which was accepted. Conditions were agreed to, requiring all photographs competing to be from exposures made within twelve months, and all work on negative and print to be done by competitor. The fifty prints to represent Cambridge were chosen from the exhibition as it hung on the walls and sent

into Boston in time for the joint exhibition and competition. Victory again favored the Cambridge club, who received sixty points more than their adversaries.

At the eleventh annual meeting, December 3, 1902, the old board of officers, Mr. Thorp, Mr. Sharples and Miss Peabody were re-elected. Twelve regular meetings had been held and the club had once visited, by invitation, the studio of Mr. F. Holland Day. In addition to the successful portraits of members' contest, competitions in Classes A, B and C had been held, but the lantern contest was given up from lack of interest. The secretary's report called attention to the termination of the club's tenth year of life, and closed with the hopeful prayer, "*Long live the Old Cambridge Photographic Club.*"

1902-3

A challenge to a third competition received from the Boston Camera Club was declined, partly in consequence of some real or fancied want of good feeling shown by members of the Boston Club on the occasion of their last defeat, but mainly no doubt for want of interest.

A plan for club work proposed by the council seemed to promise well, — that a paragraph from some well-known book be selected for illustration. In the following discussion the original design was changed, and "Contentment" adopted for a subject, but little or no interest was shown, only four members being ready on the day appointed for handing in the photographs, and the competition failed utterly.

Twenty-two members contributed to the tenth annual exhibition, held in Browne and Nichols Hall from April 18 to 22, 1903, but the display did not prove very

attractive to the public, the attendance, which had been gradually declining for some years, falling to about sixteen hundred, the smallest since the second exhibition in 1895.

Twenty-eight snow landscapes, entered in competition for a prize offered by Miss C. E. Peabody, were hung at the meeting of May 20. Mr. Corne, who acted as judge, spoke of the unusual variety of subjects and the general excellence of the whole collection. The prize was awarded to Mr. Sharples for a mountain view.

Early in June Mr. and Mrs. Kettell, who had recently removed to Lexington, asked the club to their new house. The few who accepted the invitation enjoyed a delightful informal gathering and afternoon tea.

The usual thirteen regular meetings were held during the year with an average attendance of fifteen, and club competitions were held in Classes A, B and C. At the annual meeting, November 18, 1903, Mr. Thorp retired from the presidency at his own request, and Mr. Sharples was elected president, Mr. Peabody vice-president and Miss Peabody secretary.

CONCLUSION.

A review of the last eleven years shows the Old Cambridge Photographic Club to have been founded in a happy hour, just when the old albumen silver print, with its superfluity of detail, was giving way to more artistic methods, and photographers had begun to reach out after higher ideals,— a favorable opportunity to join in and go forward with the new movement. The question which most disturbed the original members, whether a successful society could be carried on at

small expense, very soon answered itself, and the annual assessments, averaging one dollar and a half for ordinary expenditures and three dollars for exhibitions, have been repaid a thousandfold in profit and pleasure. The club records are an interesting study, showing how a few individuals, without extraordinary qualifications, may by earnest, well-directed labor, conquer for themselves a high place in the world of art, and also, alas! that high rank can only be maintained by the same steady, unremitting effort. Progress for the last four or five years has not been what it might and should be in many ways. The old enthusiasm and club feeling have sadly waned, the old enterprises and contests to which so much of the old success was due, have been discontinued one by one, or are entered in an indifferent, half-hearted way. The announcement is made every year that the exhibition is superior to any preceding one, and it is, no doubt, true that some improvement is shown from year to year, but the standard grows higher every day, and Cambridge fails to keep up, following now where once it led. This is due in great part, no doubt, to the listlessness natural in an old society, but largely also to the doctrine inculcated of late, that the main end and object of a photographic club is the production, no matter by what means, of a few pretty prints which can be exhibited and win medals, — a very short-sighted view. Let the club be regarded as a school where all may become accomplished photographers, and let all, members and council alike, work strenuously together to better each day's work, always putting the club first and the individual second, and the medals will accumulate in heaps.

There is enough enthusiasm now latent which only wants arousing and encouraging ; a new council have been elected, young, talented and energetic ; to them all turn, assured that their trust is not misplaced, and convinced that the new management will inaugurate an era of unexampled prosperity and advancement, giving to the future historian the pleasant task of recording fresh victories and triumphs new, beginning with the year 1903-04.

CAMBRIDGE, November 20, 1903.

OLD CAMBRIDGE PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB.

CONSTITUTION.

I. NAME.

This association shall be known as the Old Cambridge Photographic Club.

II. OBJECT.

The object of the club shall be the advancement of the knowledge of photography and the promotion of social intercourse among its members.

III. MEMBERSHIP.

1. The members shall be residents of Cambridge, practising photography.

2. The number of members shall be limited to twenty-five.

3. The secretary shall keep a list of names of those who may be proposed for membership, and the council may nominate from this list candidates to fill vacancies.

4. The council shall constitute an election committee for members. Proposals for membership must be in writing and signed by at least two members of the club. Proposals shall contain the full names and addresses of the persons proposed and a statement of the reasons why, in the opinion of the proposers, they would be desirable members. The council shall report the names of persons proposed, by mail, to all members of the club, at least two weeks before taking any action upon them, and objections may be offered to any of the names proposed, such communications to be regarded by the council as confidential.

5. Newly-elected members who fail to notify the secretary of acceptance, and to affix their signatures to the constitution, within one month of their election, shall not be counted as members.

6. Members absenting themselves from four successive meetings, without sending excuses, shall be regarded as having withdrawn from the club.

7. A non-resident when nominated by the council may be elected an associate member; provided, however, that the number of associate members shall at no time exceed five. Associate members shall be elected by the same vote and pay the same assessments as members, and shall have the privilege of attending all meetings and engaging in all competitions, but shall have no vote and shall not receive the books circulated among the members.

IV. OFFICERS.

1. The officers of the club shall be a president, vice-president, and a secretary, who shall also act as treasurer.

2. These officers shall be the executive council, having charge of the property and affairs of the club, with power to decide all questions not provided for by the constitution.

3. The officers shall be chosen by ballot at the annual meeting, and hold office during the ensuing year.

4. The council shall have power to fill all vacancies in their number and to appoint a substitute, *pro tem.*, for any officer unable from any cause to attend to his duties.

V. MEETINGS.

1. Regular meetings shall be held fortnightly, from October to June, at the residences of the members.

2. The ranking officer present shall preside at all meetings.

3. Five members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

4. The second regular meeting after the summer recess shall be the annual meeting.

5. Field meetings, excursions and exhibitions shall be arranged by the council at suitable times.

6. No residents of Cambridge, other than the family of the members receiving the club, shall be asked as guests to any regular meeting.

VI. ASSESSMENTS.

1. Assessments not exceeding two dollars for each member, in any one year, shall be made by the council when necessary to cover the running expenses of the club.

2. Expenses of field meetings and excursions shall be borne by the members participating.

VII. AMENDMENTS.

The constitution may be amended by a three-fourths vote of the members present at any regular meeting; provided that the proposed amendment has been stated in full at a previous meeting, or that at least one week's notice of the proposed amendment has been sent to all members by the secretary. In any case, notice of meeting at which an amendment is to be voted on, must contain the words, "amendment to constitution."

OLD CAMBRIDGE PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB.

LIST OF MEMBERS.

| | | | |
|--|----------------|----------|----------|
| Miss Alice C. Allyn, | Original | March | 1899 |
| Miss Caroline L. Parsons, | Original | Dec. | 5, 1893 |
| Miss Caroline E. Peabody, | Original | | |
| Miss Helen T. Peabody, | Original | | |
| Mr. Henry L. Rand, | Original | | |
| Mr. Henry M. Spelman, | Original | May | 21, 1895 |
| Prof. F. C. de Sumichrast, | Original | April | 27, 1892 |
| Mr. James A. Wells, | Original | | |
| Mr. Charles T. Carruth, | March 22, 1892 | | |
| Mrs. Anna K. Carruth, | March 22, 1892 | | |
| Mr. William F. Corne, | March 22, 1892 | Nov. | 21, 1900 |
| Miss Cornelia Horsford, | March 22, 1892 | Nov. | 28, 1892 |
| Miss Katherine W. Lane, | March 22, 1892 | Nov. | 28, 1892 |
| Rev. Robert S. Morison, | March 22, 1892 | | |
| Miss Olive M. Swan, | March 22, 1892 | Nov. | 21, 1893 |
| Mr. Robert W. Willson, | April 13, 1892 | May | 21, 1895 |
| Rev. Henry A. Parker, | April 13, 1892 | Nov. | 3, 1896 |
| Miss Alberta M. Houghton, | April 13, 1892 | Dec. | 3, 1895 |
| Mr. Charles W. Kettell, | May 18, 1892 | | |
| Mrs. Fanny H. Kettell, | May 18, 1892 | | |
| Miss Frederica K. Davis, | May 25, 1892 | Nov. | 5, 1895 |
| Prof. James B. Greenough, | Nov. 28, 1892 | Nov. | 9, 1897 |
| Prof. Frederic D. Allen, | Jan. 31, 1893 | *Aug. | 4, 1897 |
| Mrs. Emmeline L. Allen, | Jan. 31, 1893 | | |
| Miss Elizabeth T. Thornton, <i>Associate</i> , | Jan. 31, 1893 | April | 17, 1894 |
| Mrs. Edith Guild Taussig, | Feb. 14, 1893 | | |
| Mr. Charles F. Batchelder, | Feb. 14, 1893 | Jan. | 14, 1896 |
| Mr. Joseph G. Thorp, Jr., | April 26, 1893 | | |
| Rev. Max L. Kellner, | May 8, 1893 | Nov. | 21, 1893 |
| Mr. Wm. H. Pickering, <i>Associate</i> , | Jan. 2, 1894 | Promoted | |
| Miss Anna R. Gade, | Jan. 2, 1894 | Dec. | 19, 1894 |
| Miss Lois L. Howe, | Feb. 13, 1894 | | |
| Prof. F. C. de Sumichrast, | March 13, 1894 | Dec. | 13, 1895 |

| | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Miss Laura P. Stone, <i>Associate</i> , | Nov. 20, 1894 | Promoted |
| Mrs. Laura P. Batchelder, | Feb. 26, 1895 | Jan. 14, 1896 |
| Miss Mary Devens, | Nov. 17, 1895 | |
| Prof. Wm. H. Pickering, | Nov. 17, 1895 | Nov. 9, 1898 |
| Mr. Wm. R. Whittemore, | Nov. 17, 1895 | Nov. 9, 1898 |
| Miss Elizabeth H. Smith, | Dec. 31, 1895 | |
| Mr. Philip P. Sharples, | Dec. 31, 1895 | |
| Mrs. Margaret M. Russell, | Dec. 1, 1897 | |
| Mr. Francis E. Frothingham, <i>Associate</i> , | Dec. 1, 1897 | March 23, 1898 |
| Mr. Frederic de Puyster Townsend, | Nov. 23, 1898 | May 2, 1900 |
| Miss Mary F. Russell, <i>Associate</i> , | Nov. 23, 1898 | April 3, 1901 |
| Mrs. Lillian H. Russell, | April 1, 1899 | Dec. 31, 1902 |
| Mr. Nathaniel C. Nash, | April 5, 1899 | April 17, 1901 |
| Mr. Charles R. Sanger, | Nov. 29, 1899 | |
| Mrs. Myra H. Sanger, | Nov. 29, 1899 | |
| Miss Sarah Yerxa, | March 27, 1900 | |
| Mrs. Kate D. Kidder, | Oct. 8, 1900 | Nov. 13, 1901 |
| Mrs. Jennie R. Woodbury, <i>Associate</i> , | April 17, 1901 | |
| Mr. James J. Greenough, | Jan. 3, 1901 | March 20, 1902 |
| Miss Margaret A. Leavitt, | Jan. 3, 1901 | |
| Miss Percy S. Thaxter, <i>Associate</i> , | Dec. 18, 1901 | |
| Mr. W. P. P. Longfellow, | Dec. 3, 1902 | |
| Mr. Charles T. Paine, | Dec. 3, 1902 | |
| Mrs. Jeannette B. Peabody, | Dec. 3, 1902 | |
| Mr. Charles Peabody, | Dec. 3, 1902 | |

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